(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that these drugs/medicines are seldom prescribed by doctors due to their ineffectiveness; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to contain or fix the prices of branded drugs/medicines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) Pharma companies have agreed to voluntarily restrict the trade margins for generic medicines to 15% for wholesalers and 35% for retailers. A compilation of the list of 886 such medicines, whose prices have been voluntarily reduced by 11 companies as a result of this cap on trade margins has been brought out. The list is available on this Department's Website www.chemicals .gov.in. It covers formulations in all dosage forms such as tablets, capsules and syrups, etc. which find usage in the treatment of a large number of diseases. The medicines covered are anti diabetics, antibiotics, cough syrups, painkillers as well as those used during the surgical operations, for the cure of the infectious diseases and for the treatment of hypertension etc.

The drug policies of the Government as amended from time to time are directed towards making available quality drugs at reasonable prices to the consumers in the country.

Export of rice intended for BPL and rationing

†294. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the rice being provided for ration and BPL consumers by Government, is being procured and exported by the traders;

(b) whether it is a fact that Kutch Civil Supply Department has recovered

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

large quantity of rice from a rice mill in Chudva, if so, the details thereof:

(c) the quantity of such rice recovered during the last one year;

(d) the number of persons who have been found involved in such illegal acts along with details of action taken against them; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to put a check on such theft in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) Based on a news item telecast by a TV Channel on 16-10-2006, regarding export of PDS rice, a factual position was called for from the Government of Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat reported that on inspection of a premises/godowns of a firm in Chudva, District Kutch, it was noted that the firm had stored 6401.508 MTs rice at seven different places for which the firm failed to produce purchase bills. Stacking of rice bags was haphazard, so that it was difficult to count. Moreover, most of rice bags had labels of FCI, so there was reason to believe that these rice may be of PDS quota. District Supply Officer (DSO) of the Government of Gujarat seized 3401.200 MT basmati rice and 3000.308 MT non-basmati rice. The Collector, Kutch released 3401.200 MT basmati rice as basmati rice is not distributed under PDS.

(e) The Government is taking necessary steps to curb diversion/leakage of TPDS foodgrains. A system to monitor distribution of foodgrains and other goods being distributed under PDS is already in place. Under the System, the responsibility for distribution of foodgrains and other goods through PDS outlets lies with the respective State Government. However, after consulting all the State Food Ministers/Food Secretaries, an Action Plan has been prepared on ways to curb leakages/diversions under TPDS. The Action Points include undertaking a campaign for review of BPL/AAY families to eliminate ghost ration cards; to take strict action against the guilty under the PDS (Control) Order; to involve elected members of the

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in distribution of foodgrains at the Fair Price Shop (FPS) level and issue of FPS licences to Self Help Groups (SGs), Gram Panchayats, Cooperatives, etc.; display of all Below Poverty Line (BPL)/Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) lists; display of district-wise and Fair Price Shop-wise allocation of foodgrains on websites and other prominent places for public scrutiny; door step delivery of foodgrains; timely availability of foodgrains; computerization of TPDS to ensure distribution of foodgrains in a transparent and effective manner. In addition, the Government has also taken steps to introduce electronic transfer of funds to FCI and issued instructions for display of banners/Boards on the wind-shield as well as rear end of the truck/vehicles carrying PDS articles indicating details of State Government, destination, commodity and Agent's name.

Amendments in the Essential Commodities Act

295. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the delisting of agricultural commodities from the Essential Commodities Act followed by its amendments are followed by an increase in the coverage of futures and forward trading in the agricultural commodities; and

(b) if so, whether Government would have a re-look into the whole issue of amending the Essential Commodities Act in the light of recent abnormal increase in prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No agricultural commodity has been delisted from the Essential Commodities Act since December, 2004. There has also been no addition to agricultural commodities notified for future trading during this period.

(b) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.